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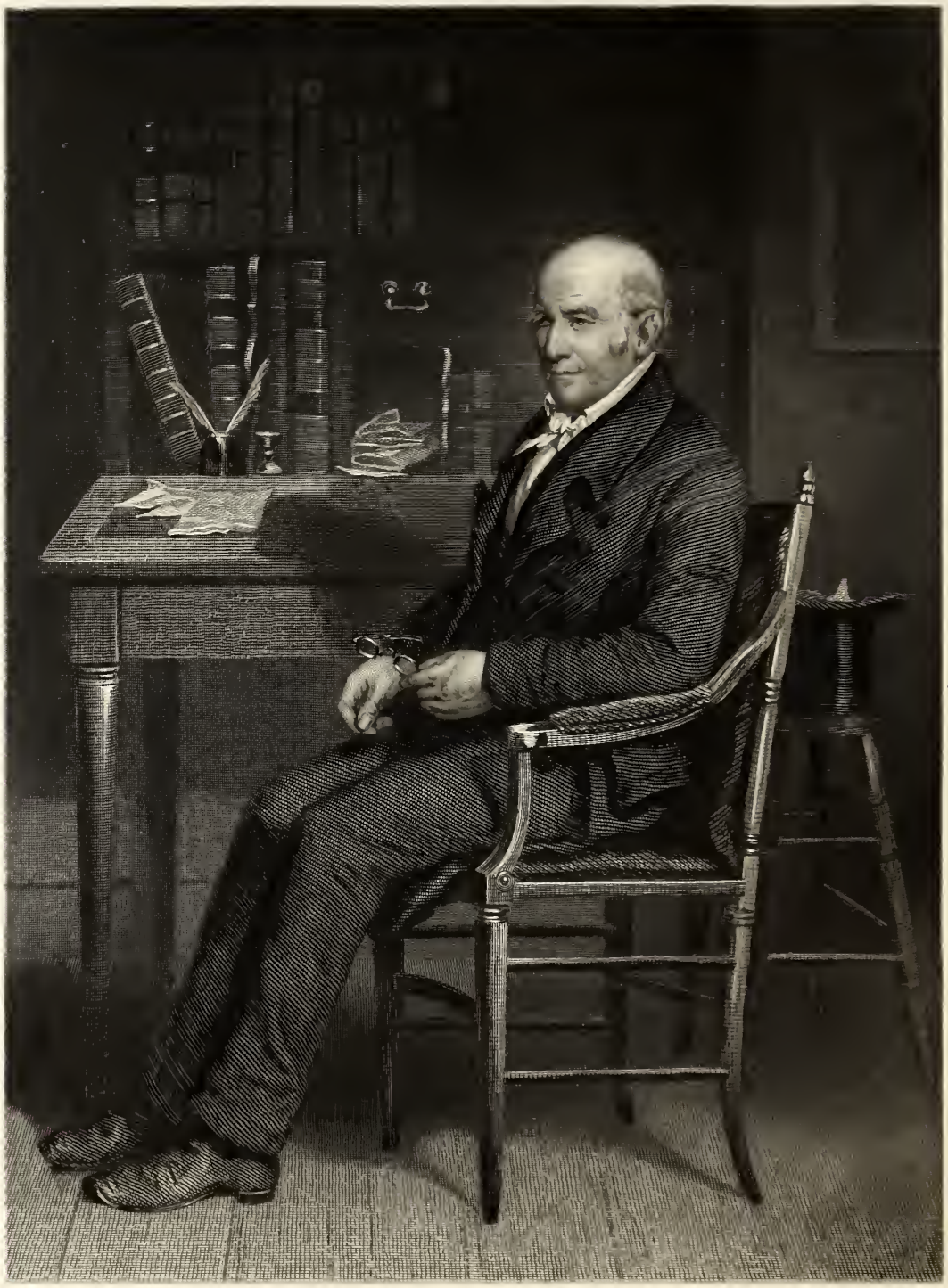

Stephen Girard

was also some disaffection in a part of Arnold's command. In the midst of these disheartening circumstances, a plan of storming operations was determined upon between Arnold and Montgomery, which awaited only a favorable opportunity for its execution. The outer defences of the town were to be attacked on different sides by the several American officers, and a combined assault to be made upon one of its most accessible gates. To Montgomery was assigned one of the southerly approaches to the lower town. The thirtieth of December brought with it the coveted opportunity in a threatening snow-storm. In the night of that day, or rather before the dawn of the next, the forces assembled at their stations. Montgomery led his men, composed of Campbell's New York regiment and a portion of militia from Massachusetts, through a thick snow-storm from Wolfe's Cove, along the side of the cliff beneath Cape Diamond to a point where a fortified block-house stood, protected in front by a stockade. A loaded cannon stood ready charged with grape. It was fired, tradition says, by a drunken sailor, who returned to his post as his comrades fled. However this may be, the discharge was fatally effective. Montgomery fell, with his aid, Captain Macpherson, and the brave Captain Cheeseman of New York.

The death of Montgomery, the old companion of Wolfe, falling in an attempt to renew his brilliant victory, created an impression through the colonies equalled only by the fate of Warren. Congress, by resolution of January 25, 1776, resolved that a funeral oration in his honor should be delivered, and called Dr. William Smith, the learned and eloquent head of the college at Philadelphia, to pronounce the eulogium. A monument also was decreed, which was executed—a graceful work, under the charge of Franklin—in Paris, and placed beneath the portico of St. Paul's Church, in Broadway, New York, where it arrests the eye of the passer by, with its beauty of form and appropriate inscription. In 1818, the remains of the gallant leader were brought from Quebec to repose near this sculptured stone.[1]

[1] The tears and eloquence of his country, and its funereal monument, bear witness to the worth of the man and the hero; but perhaps the most significant tribute of all was paid his memory in the exclamation of Lord North, in Parliament, in a verse of Addison—

"Curse on his virtues, they've undone his country."

The remark of Lord North was in reply to the eulogies of Colonel Barré and Burke. "He conquered," said the latter, "two-thirds of Canada in one campaign." Fox seconded the tribute. It was then that North interposed with his polished remonstrance, admitting indeed, "that he was brave, able, humane, generous; but still he was only a brave, able, humane and generous rebel," adding the line from Cato. Fox then again rose. "He was the less earnest," he said, "to clear him of the imputation, for that all the great assertors of liberty, the saviors of their country, the benefactors of mankind in all ages, had been called rebels; they even owed the constitution which enabled them to sit in that house to a rebellion," closing with a most felicitous quotation from Virgil, an application of that sentence where the chief sees pictured on the walls of the temple at Carthage, in a distant land, the honorable exploits of his brethren fallen at Troy—

"Sunt *hic* etiam sua præmia laudi,
Sunt lacrymæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."

Fox never appeared nobler than in thus erecting in the very sanctuary of Parliament this monument to a fallen foe.

JOHN JAY.

The ancestry of Jay, "the Christian patriot" of the Revolution, carries us back to the history of that fatal persecution in France, consequent on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, which sent so many brave and good men, the very life blood of their country, wanderers about the world, to taste the hardships of poverty and exile in foreign lands. But it frequently happened, that while France was impoverished by the forced departure of her choicest spirits, other countries gained strength from their presence, while they themselves, after having been tossed on many seas, found at last the prosperous Lavinian shore. Of those who, under another sun, became founders of families, and we may add founders of the state, none are more worthy of distinction than the Jays of New York. The Huguenot ancestor from whom the family is descended was Pierre or Peter Jay, a prosperous merchant of Rochelle, in France, who escaped with a portion of his property to England, when the persecution became no longer endurable, leaving his son Augustus, then absent on a foreign venture, to provide for his own safety on his return. The son, following the father's example, by the aid of his friends was enabled to sail for Charleston, South Carolina, a region which afforded a home to many of the exiles whose descendants have adorned the annals of that State. Driven from South Carolina, however, by ill health, Augustus took refuge in New York, a friendly haven which had in like manner sheltered many of his unhappy brethren. The Protestant influences of the place furnished a bond of sympathy, while the commercial activity of the city afforded a ready means of livelihood to the mercantile adventurer educated in a European seaport. Augustus there found employment as supercargo. In 1692, we hear of his taking passage for Hamburg, in a vessel which was captured by a French privateer and carried into St. Malo, when with other prisoners he was confined in a dungeon in the district, from which he managed to escape, making his way in safety to Rochelle, to be a second time smuggled out of his native country in a foreign vessel. This time he was taken to Denmark, when his route to America gave him the opportunity of seeing his father in England. His mother was no more, and his younger brother, Isaac, was dead from wounds received fighting for the Protestant hero, William, at the Battle of the Boyne.

A few years after the return of Augustus to New York, he married the daughter of Balthazar Bayard, a refugee of an earlier set of French exiles, for conscience sake, who had found his way to America from the new home of the family in Holland. This alliance fairly established the adventurer in the city of his choice. And here we may cite the simple narrative of John Jay, in which these events are recorded, as he looks back with reverential feeling to the American founder of his family. "From what has been said," says he, addressing his children, "you will observe with pleasure and with gratitude how kindly and how amply Providence was pleased to provide for the welfare of our ancestor Augustus. The beneficent care of Heaven appears to have been evidently and remarkably extended to all those persecuted exiles. Strange as it may seem, I never heard of one of them who asked or received alms; nor have I any reason to suspect, much less to believe, that any of them came to this country in a destitute condition."

Augustus died at a good old age in 1751, leaving a son Peter, who married a Miss Van Cortlandt, the descendant of a Protestant exile from Bohemia. Having secured a fortune in mercantile life, he purchased the estate at Rye, in Westchester County, still occupied by the family, whither he retired. His eighth child, John, the subject of our notice, was born in the city of New York, December 12, 1745.

Piety was a tradition, a habit of daily life in the home of the child, who early exhibited the fruit of the domestic training, ingrafted on his natural qualities, in his reserved, studious disposition. The mother's influence, in that beautiful rural dwelling, overlooking the blue waters of the Sound, shaded by the favorite locusts of the region, presents a more than pleasing picture, as she reads "the best authors" to her two children, who were deprived of sight by the smallpox, and teaches the future Chief Justice, a grave, intelligent boy, the elements of his Latin grammar. At eight, the child was sent to the school of the French clergyman at New Rochelle, where he learnt to speak French, and endure the usual privations of the old improvident, badly-managed country boarding-school life. A private tutor subsequently prepared the boy for Columbia, then King's College, where, in due time, he took his degree with distinguished honor, in 1764, in his nineteenth year, under the presidency of the famous Myles Cooper, of Tory memory.

Having chosen the profession of the law, he entered the office of Benjamin Kissam, a leading practitioner in the city, with whom he enjoyed a very pleasing intimacy during his clerkship. In 1768 he was admitted to the bar, and entered at once upon an active and profitable practice. Evidence of his standing may be gathered from the fact that he was chosen secretary of the commission appointed by the king to settle the boundary between New York and New Jersey. In 1774, at the age of twenty-nine, he married Sarah, the daughter of William Livingston, afterwards the first governor of New Jersey, at the establishment of independence.

It was a stirring year in New York, in the conflict of parties on the eve of the Revolution. Jay promptly chose the part of his country. He was a member of the committee appointed at a meeting of his fellow-citizens, which in May proposed a Congress of Deputies from the Colonies in general, and when, out of this and kindred resolutions of the different States, the old Continental Congress was summoned at Philadelphia in the following year, John Jay took his seat in that body, it is believed, the youngest member of the House. He lived to survive all his associates.

The first business of the Congress was to present the questions at issue with the parent country, and appeal for the redress of grievances. It was the session which produced those admirable state papers, the addresses to the King, the Houses of Parliament, the British Colonies, and the People of Great Britain, which extorted the admiration of all soberly thinking Englishmen, and drew down, from his Jove-like eminence, the applause of Chatham in the House of Lords. Jay wrote the Address to the People of Great Britain, a model of calm, just, forcible statement, eloquent by its simple truthfulness and sincerity. He could write with feeling of tyranny, whose blood tingled with the recollection of oppression. He did not forget the family Protestantism in this document, in the picture which he drew of the Roman Catholic allies of the Parliament in Canada. One of the opening sentences of the preamble, apparently very simple, is peculiarly imposing: "In almost every age, in repeated conflicts, in long and bloody wars, as well civil as foreign, against many and powerful nations, against the open assaults of enemies and the more dangerous treachery of friends, have the inhabitants of your island, your great and glorious ancestors, maintained their independence, and transmitted the rights of men and the blessings of liberty to you, their posterity."

In the second Congress, of the next year, to which he was sent by a convention of his State, he prepared the addresses to the People of Canada and of Jamaica and Ireland. During the session of 1776, he was recalled to the service of the New York Convention, of which he was a member, which, in deed, needed his abilities, and it was in this way that his name does not appear among the signatures to the Declaration of Independence. He was at the time with the Convention at White Plains; the paper was put in his hands as chairman of a committee, and the strong resolution of approval was from his hand.

His State, indeed, required all the energy of her patriotic children. Jay was unwearied in his devotion, counselling, personally superintending military movements—he was now Col. Jay, of the State militia—and rousing his pen to unwonted energy in stirring appeals to his countrymen. Strong measures of repression, in which he bore an active part, were necessary to control the disaffected. The ambulatory Convention, hunted by the British, posted through various stations in Westchester to Poughkeepsie. At the

first invasion, the homestead at Rye was abandoned for the period of the war.

Jay's chief service to his State, however, was in the formation of the Constitution of 1777, which was drafted by his hands. Its property qualification embodied his favorite maxim, in respect to the suffrage, that "those who own the country ought to govern it," or in other words, that representation should follow taxation; and he would have contended for other provisions, the chief of which, in furtherance of a cause always dear to his heart, was a provision against the continuance of domestic slavery, had he not been prevented by absence from the Convention, at the death-bed of his mother, at the final adoption of the instrument. Under its provisions, he received the appointment of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. On opening the first term, at Kingston, he took occasion, in an address to the grand jury, to present an animated view of the progress of the Revolutionary contest, the success of which he attributed to the blessing of Heaven, while he pointed out some of the provisions of the new Constitution, particularly specifying its security for the rights of conscience and private judgment. The habitual piety, his reference of all things to sacred duty in this composition, is no less noticeable than its enlightened patriotism.

By a provision of the State Constitution, the judges were not allowed to sit in Congress, unless on a special occasion. Mr. Jay had, consequently, vacated his seat in that body. At the end of 1778, however, an opportunity having arisen in the Vermont question, he was returned to that body, and was immediately, on the resignation of Laurens, chosen its President. To attend the more efficiently to his national duties, he resigned the post of Chief Justice of the State.

In his early attendance upon Congress, Mr. Jay had become connected with the negotiations abroad as a member of the secret committee of correspondence. He was now, in 1779, himself chosen to continue in Europe the negotiations then brought about with France, and was sent as minister plenipotentiary to Spain, with the intent to accomplish an alliance with that country. He embarked with his wife, in October, at a few days' notice, from Philadelphia in the frigate Confederacy, in company with the French minister, Gerard. Severe injury to the vessel in a gale compelled them to put into Martinique, where they luckily avoided the British cruisers. Resuming the voyage in the French frigate Aurora, and again narrowly escaping an English man-of-war, the harbor of Cadiz was at length made, and Jay commenced the wearisome and unsatisfactory duties of his mission. Spanish diplomacy is always dilatory, and Spain, on this occasion, had no particular motive to be in earnest, so long as the Colonies continued in arms against England. The expected subsidy was slow in coming, or doled out pitifully. Jay required all his resources to meet the drafts drawn upon him for the wants of Congress at home. Had he not been assisted by Franklin, at Paris, and the French loan, the case would

have been well-nigh hopeless, while Spain was driving her hard bargain for the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, which Congress was weak enough, at last, to send directions to Jay to yield. The clause was in consequence actually inserted in the plan of a treaty, with the proviso, however, introduced by Jay, that should the treaty not be concluded before a general peace, the United States would not be bound to surrender the navigation. The negotiations for peace, however, now intervened, and leaving the protracted, humiliating Spanish transactions uncompleted, Jay, in the summer of 1782, joined his fellow-commissioners at Paris. Of the five appointed by Congress to represent the interest of the different portions of the Confederacy, namely, Adams, Jay, Franklin, Jefferson and Laurens, two only were now in Paris—Jay himself and Franklin—upon whom the burden of the business fell. Jay, though he had been originally sent abroad by the party in Congress in the French interest, had been taught distrust of that nation in his Spanish experiences. He suspected the motives of the French minister, Vergennes, in whose hands the chief influence in the matter had been placed by Congress, and the British agent, Oswald, being at the same time chary of France, a preliminary treaty was signed in November by Jay, Franklin, and Adams, who had now arrived from his successful negotiations in Holland. The adjustment of the great European powers which had been engaged in the struggle occupied the better portion of the ensuing year. Jay continued to reside in Paris till the definitive treaty was signed, September 3, 1783. He had proved himself a watchful guardian of the interests of the country, bearing an independent position above all party considerations; he had acted with decision at the moment when responsibility was a burden, in the separate negotiation, and the end had crowned the work. His personal moderation was as remarkable as the faithfulness with which he had discharged his duty to his country. He generously waived the proffered offer of the mission to England, as the first American representative at the Court of St. James, in favor of Adams, whose long services, he thought, entitled him to this gratification of his wishes, and turned his thoughts from the honors of courts and cabinets to home and retirement. He thought far more of the claims upon his love and attention of his blind brother and sister, in the shades of Westchester, than of the most brilliant prospects of European society. It was a mingled forbearance and single-minded simplicity of character worthy of Washington himself. Indeed, the style of the two men, as exhibited in their public writings and private correspondence—the best index of their natures—in a certain fulness, ease and amenity, has much in common.

The Spanish mission being closed and peace thus happily concluded, after a few months passed in England, chiefly occupied in the care of his health, which had become impaired, Jay returned, full of joy and gratitude, to America, a private citizen, in the

summer of 1784. He was met by a new demand from Congress for his services as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the delicate and important duties of which he continued to discharge till the old Confederation was supplanted by the present Constitution. As the time for the formation of this new organization approached, Jay, one of its earliest advocates, bent his efforts to its accomplishment. In a letter to General Washington, dated Jan. 7, 1787, he suggests the present division of the powers of government, with a leaning to a stronger consolidation than was adopted, and advises that the acts of the new Convention should be considered conclusive, without fresh agitations and indorsements in the several States, already represented.[1] Being engaged in his official duties under the old Congress of New York, he was not a member of the Convention at Philadelphia, in 1787, which framed the Constitution. In conjunction, however, with Hamilton and Madison, he brought his best powers to the service of the instrument when it was before the public, encountering the fierce wrangling and discussion which he had anticipated and deprecated. Five papers of that able exposition, "The Federalist," are from his pen; the second, third, fourth and fifth, on dangers from foreign force and influence, and the sixty-fourth on the treaty-making power of the Senate, which one of the most important acts of his later life was destined to expose to the fiercest discussion, when it should be no longer a theory, but a practical power of the government. He would probably have written more but for a wound he received at the time in his vindication of the laws in the riot known as Doctors' Mob, in the city of New York. This unhappy affair, one of a class occasionally recurring about the world under similar circumstances, grew out of an alleged violation of the grave, by some medical students connected with the Hospital. Much feeling was excited. The people assailed the building, plundered its contents, and buried several bodies which they found there. The physicians were lodged in the jail for safety. Every popular excitement of this kind gains strength by its first successes. The mob was next bent on attacking the jail. The medical men of the city were not safe. The militia were in arms, and good citizens rallied to the protection of life and property. Jay was proceeding with Hamilton in the discharge of this duty in the midst of the excited populace, when he was struck with a stone to the ground. This injury circumscribed his papers for "The Federalist." On his recovery, however, he made amends in an able pamphlet on the Constitution, addressed to the people of New York.

When the Federal Government assumed its powers in the first Congress, at New York, in March, 1789, Washington cast his eyes upon Jay as among the foremost men in the country for the discharge of the highest office in its gift. Jay, looking back upon his past training and discipline, conscientiously chose the Supreme Court, over which he was appointed Chief Justice. He

[1] Jay's Life of Jay, I. 257.

served for awhile, however, as Secretary of State, till the arrival of Jefferson from abroad, when, upon the full organization of the court, he entered upon its duties. In 1792, he was put in nomination for Governor of the State, and received the popular vote; though his election was defeated by an informality in the returns, which threw the office again into the hands of Clinton.

The greatly embarrassed relations of the country with England, growing out of the unsettled commercial questions, and the war of that power with France, and a system of agitation fomented by the latter nation in America, rendered an adjustment of the growing difficulties absolutely necessary. The selection was between England and France. To the mind of many serious politicians of those days, it was the choice of Hercules, the determination between good and evil, the powers of light and darkness. Great Britain was inconsiderate and aggressive, and war seemed imminent. At this crisis, at the strong urgency of Washington, Jay accepted the mission to England, with the view of negotiating a satisfactory treaty. He sailed from New York on the 12th May, 1794. On his arrival in England in June, he was received with the courtesy which his disposition and conduct, as well as the objects of his embassy invited. The negotiations proceeded prosperously, under the conduct of Lord Grenville, with the favor of the king, and in November the treaty was signed. It made provision for the rights of neutrals, and the abandonment of the western posts, which secured peace on the seas and the frontiers, while its commercial adjustments were mutilated by the restrictive policy then prevailing, and little could be done on the vexed question of impressment. If it was not the best of all possible treaties, it was acknowledged by men of dispassionate judgment, wise enough to admit that theoretical right must sometimes yield to judicious statesmanship, to be a success under the circumstances. The bitterness with which the instrument was received by the French party in America, before and after its final ratification by Great Britain, and the treaty making power at home is matter of history. It shared the odium which the delirium of the French Revolution had infused into the minds of its admirers, in respect to all antagonistic influences, real or supposed. The indignation of the disappointed popular party, as they considered themselves, knew no bounds. France was exalted as the "natural ally" of America, and the phrase "British gold," which has since from time to time echoed through our elections, first stole into the mouths of politicians. Copies of the treaty were publicly burnt by the people in New York and Philadelphia; Virginia was obstreperous in indignation, and a democratic society in South Carolina lamented the want of a guillotine for its author. The very sanctity and good faith of the Constitution was invaded in Congress, in an attempt to defeat its provisions in the House of Representatives. Greatly aided by the influence of Washington, and the eloquence of Fisher Ames, it finally became the law of the land.

On his return from England, Mr. Jay was met at New York by the news of his election as Governor of the State. He accepted the office, and accordingly resigned the high judicial station, which had conferred additional consequence upon his pacific embassy to England. For six years he continued to hold this distinguished position, marking his administration by a uniform course of duty, firmly and conscientiously performed in a patriotic and Christian spirit. The recommendation of a legislative provision for the better observance of the Sabbath, is characteristic of his sentiments on an important subject; while the views which he had long advocated on the subject of negro slavery were carried out in the act of gradual emancipation.

In 1801, in his fifty-sixth year, Mr. Jay finally retired from public life, to pass the remainder of his days at the family estate, which had descended to him at Bedford, in Westchester County. His first employment was to build the plain, substantial mansion, still occupied in a third generation by his family, after having been honored by the residence of his benevolent son, the late esteemed William Jay.

In this rural retreat, then greatly secluded from city cares and influences, he lived for nearly thirty years, employing himself, as Washington employed himself at Mount Vernon, with the innocent and engrossing pursuits of agriculture, the care of his household, correspondence with his friends—they were often the same friends—or occasionally reviewing the history of the past, more constantly engaged in the benevolent occupations of philanthropy and religion in the present, till, at the advanced term of four score and four, the reward of a righteous life, on the noon of Sunday, the 17th May, 1829, with mind unimpaired, he passed to "the bosom of his Father and his God."

The reflections which arise at the close of such a life, are the best tributes humanity can render in its praise. Here was one who passed through many relations, exposed to peculiar temptation and difficulty, not merely without stain, but clothed in a transcendent robe of purity. His Christian patriotism shed glory upon a cause which needed such aid and such defenders. His grave aspect, reverend in council, covered a heart glowing with the sweet kindnesses and charities of domestic life. We see in his correspondence, in a certain undress of the mind, a gentle consideration, a playful humor, and unstudied grace of expression, which he must be little read in the evidences of a kindly nature who will misinterpret. Indeed, the literary abilities of Jay were of a high order. In his state papers we have seen him unsurpassed by his most accomplished associates of the Old Congress. Glancing over the volumes of his life and writings, published by his son, we find other evidences of talent as conclusive. The able analysis of the Farewell Address of Washington, in reference to the alleged claim of Hamilton to its composition—a claim which he himself would have been the last to bring forward—in the letter to his favorite correspondent, Judge Peters, is a masterpiece of literary skill, blending the

finer powers of the judicial and the asthetic mind. He proves not only that Washington could have written it, but that it is what he would have written, that its composition was nothing wonderful to him, seeing it was but the expression in words of the acts of his life, in perfect consonance with the Horatian maxim which compels language uninvitedly to follow the foregone matter in the mind, and which treats wisdom as the origin and fount of all good writing. The show of considerations such as these, evinces a philosophical mind, which might have graced many walks of authorship. Let us add a humble touch of nature to our sketch of a man who should be known by our hearths and firesides, in the daily friendship of life, as well as on his pedestal in history. The foreign minister, at the most brilliant period of his career, when he had recently signed the Treaty of 1783 at Paris, writing from England to his friend, Mr. Benson, in America, thinks—of what?—of his achievements? of his reflected consequence in the glory of his country? Not a word of it. His thoughts are of an old mare which had been given him by his father, which had been carried off by depredators in the unsettled conflicts about his home, and which he now begs, if alive, may be recovered without regard to price. Have "very good care" taken of her, "by which I mean," he adds, "she should be well fed and live idle."

Consoling his friend, Peter Van Schaack, a royalist prisoner on parole in 1778, in the afflictions of life, he writes: "Could we now and then smoke a few pipes together, you would perhaps be in a better humor with many things in the world than, I think, you now are. I suspect your imagination colors high and shades too deep." Jay's habits were simple as to expense, generous as to charities, and all that constituted true comfort and respectability of living. It was his maxim, says his son and biographer, that "a wise man has money in his head, but not in his heart." He supplied the clergyman of Rye with funds to keep six poor boys of the place at school, and the fact was not known till after his death. He declined the proffered honor of the Cincinnati, thinking it did not become members of an association to bestow badges upon themselves.

The devout character of Jay tempered all the acts of his life. It was not obtruded upon the world in his public relations; neither was it withheld when the occasion admitted its expression. Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth often spoke; so that in his correspondence we find frequent mention of sacred things. He was a devout believer in Evangelical Christianity, and a sincere adherent to the Protestant Episcopal Church. In Paris he was surrounded by an atmosphere of infidelity, but it could not touch him. The faith of his fathers, which had resisted the infuriated persecutions of the seventeenth century, was not to be shaken by the shallow wits of the eighteenth.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

There are few names of more lasting influence, of more permanent regard, in our American history, than that of Hamilton. His fame is blended with the living growth of our commonwealth. While the labors of others survive on the pages of history connected with the past—with the record of wars and struggles, which, while they, perhaps, gain in grandeur by the lapse of time, become every day more strange and foreign to our perceptions; it is his fortune to be associated with a monument of political wisdom, which, often sorely tried and always triumphant, has become the very bond, and, so to speak, guardian genius of the national welfare; that Constitution by which we live and hope to live. How brilliantly Hamilton shot upon the troubled scene of the Revolution; how suddenly and unhappily was the splendid flame extinguished in meridian brightness! The vicinity of the tropics has sent few sons of its burning soil so to calm and temper the rage of men in northern climes. We must look beyond the isles of the Antilles for the secret of this peculiar growth.

The parentage of Alexander Hamilton is given by his son and biographer as of mingled Scottish and French ancestry—Scottish on the father's side, Huguenot on the mother's. Students of the doctrine of temperaments may find something to ponder over in such a fusion under the genial ray of the southern sun. Given the key, they may unlock with it many cabinets in the idiosyncrasy of the future Hamilton; Scottish perseverance and integrity, French honor and susceptibility, tropical fervor. Be that as it may, Alexander Hamilton first saw the light in the West India island St. Christophers, Jan. 11, 1757. His father was a trader or captain sailing between the islands of the archipelago, whose business brought him into relation with Nicholas Cruger, a wealthy merchant of Santa Cruz, in intimate relation with New York, in whose counting-house the son was placed at the age of twelve. He was a boy of quick intellect, in advance of his years, and had already made much of limited opportunities of instruction, as we may learn from an exceedingly well penned epistle addressed thus early to a school-fellow who had found his way to New York. In this remarkable letter, the boy seems to have written with prophetic instinct. "To confess my weakness, Ned," he says, "my ambition is prevalent, so that I contemn the grovelling condition of a clerk or the like, to

which my fortune condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station . . . . I mean to prepare the way for futurity. . . . I shall conclude by saying, I wish there was a war." This may be regarded as a boyish rhapsody; but all boys are not given to such rhapsodies.

The clerk had his hours for study as well as for the counting-room, and doubtless practised his pen in composition, for we hear of his writing an account of a fearful hurricane which visited the island, a narrative which appears to have been published, since it attracted the attention of the governor. These evidences of talent determined his friends to send him to New York to complete his education. He came, landing at Boston in the autumn of 1772, and was received at New York by the correspondents of Dr. Knox, a clergyman who had become interested in his welfare in Santa Cruz. He was immediately introduced to the school of Francis Barber, at Elizabethtown, where he enjoyed the society of the Boudinots, Livingstons, and other influential people of the colony. He studied eagerly, and at the close of a year, presented himself to Doctor Witherspoon, at Princeton, with a request to be permitted to overleap some of the usual collegiate terms according to his qualifications. As this was contrary to the usage of the place, he entered King's College, now Columbia, in New York, with the special privileges he desired. In addition to the usual studies, he attended the anatomical course of Clossey. Col. Troup, at this time his room-fellow, testifies to his earnest religious feeling, a very noticeable thing in a youth of his powers. He wrote verses freely—among them doggerel burlesques of the productions of the ministerial writers of the day.

The Revolution was now fairly getting under way, in the opening, tumultuous scenes in New York, and strong hands were wanted at the wheel. Hamilton, at the age of seventeen, in 1774, did not hesitate in making his decision. The old Continental Congress of that year, it will be remembered, met in September; it was now July, and New York was in debate as to her choice of delegates. A meeting of citizens was called in the fields, over which the patriot McDougal presided. Hamilton, whose ability had been noted, was urged to address the assembly. He complied, with hesitation, but proceeding, gained confidence, and poured forth in glowing rhetoric the story of parliamentary oppression, as he displayed the means of resistance and pictured "the waves of rebellion sparkling with fire, and washing back on the shores of England the wrecks of her power, her wealth and her glory." The speech of the young West Indian was a success.

He was now emboldened to enter the field with the dashing young president of the college, Myles Cooper, of convivial memory, in a reply in Holt's Gazette to some Tory manifesto of that divine. About this time, after the adjournment of Congress, at the close of the year, he also published a pamphlet in vindication of the measures of Congress, against the attacks of Seabury and

Wilkins. The contest, however, was one which was not to be decided by the pen alone. The old prerogative lawyers and divines were not to be shaken out of their seats by the constitutional arguments of such young counsellors as Hamilton and Jay. The hard hands of the committee of mechanics were much more demonstrative. Myles Cooper, Seabury, and their brethren very naturally suspected the logic, and laughed at the novel measures of the day by which the popular party in their restrictive, non-importation measures proposed to dispense with the wisdom of Lords and Commons, and starve themselves into independence. It is well sometimes to look at that side of the question too.

But all the pooh-poohing in the world over the best wine in the colony, was not to stop the affair which had commenced. Volunteers were drilling, men of sound heads and stout hearts were getting ready for action. There were certain cannon to be removed from the Battery: Hamilton was engaged in the duty with his comrades, "Hearts of oak" they called themselves; a boat approached from the man-of-war Asia, in the harbor; the citizens fired; the fire was returned from the ship, and one of Hamilton's company was killed. The Liberty Boys spread the alarm and gathered in a mob, threatening to attack the College and seize its president, Myles Cooper. Hamilton, who was no friend to riot, little as he was afraid of discussion or of force, interposed with a speech from the College steps, while the president, roused from his bed, half-naked, took refuge on the shore, wandering over the island in the night to the old Stuyvesant mansion, whence he was the next day finally removed from America in his majesty's vessel, the Kingfisher. The royal governor, Tryon, took refuge in the Asia shortly after.

Hamilton now turned his attention in earnest to military affairs, making choice of the artillery service, in which he gained some instruction from a British soldier, and by the aid of the popular leader, McDougal, received from the convention the appointment of captain of the Provincial Company of Artillery. He had only recently completed his nineteenth year. It was early, but not so very early for a man of genius; for the child in such cases is the father of the man, and youth is an additional spur to exertion. But this was not all. The young captain was engaged not only in the gymnastics of drilling recruits, but he was reading, thinking and working out problems in political economy for himself—and the future. Dr. Johnson said that he learnt little after eighteen; Hamilton would seem to have laid the foundation at least of all his knowledge before twenty. "His military books of this period," says his son, "give an interesting exhibition of his train of thought. In the pay-book of his company, amid various general speculations and extracts from the ancients, chiefly relating to politics and war, are intermingled tables of political arithmetic, considerations on commerce, the value of the relative productions which are its objects, the balance of trade, the progress of population, and

the principles on which depend the value of a circulating medium; and among his papers there remains a carefully digested outline of a plan for the political and commercial history of British America, compiled at this time."[1] There is the germ in all this of the Secretary of the Treasury.

It was at this time just previous to the occupation of the city by the British that Hamilton attracted the notice of General Greene, by whom he was introduced to Washington. The story is thus told by Irving: "As General Greene one day, on his way to Washington's headquarters, was passing through a field—then on the outskirts of the city, now in the heart of its busiest quarter, and known as 'the Park'—he paused to notice a provincial company of artillery, and was struck with its able performances, and with the tact and talent of its commander. He was a mere youth, apparently about twenty years of age; small in person and stature, but remarkable for his alert and manly bearing. It was Alexander Hamilton. Greene was an able tactician, and quick to appreciate any display of military science; a little conversation sufficed to convince him that the youth before him had a mind of no ordinary grasp and quickness. He invited him to his quarters, and from that time cultivated his friendship."[2]

The battle of Long Island now ensued on the vain attempt to resist the landing of Howe and his British troops, followed by the masterly retreat of Washington, in which Hamilton brought up the rear. The subsequent American proceedings in the evacuation of the city, the passage from the island to Westchester, and the subsequent retreat before Cornwallis through the Jerseys under Washington, if they had little of glory, at least required their full share of military determination and endurance. Hamilton was active throughout the campaign. At White Plains, and on the Raritan, at Trenton and Princeton, his artillery did good service. When he entered Morristown, his original company of a hundred was reduced by the accidents of war to twenty-five. Here, on the first of March, 1777, leaving the line of the army, he became attached to the staff of Washington as his aid. This was the commencement of that half military, half civil relation which identified Hamilton in joint labors and councils with the Father of his Country.

Hamilton became, in fact, the right hand man of Washington, not only during the war, but throughout his subsequent political career, and no better proof than this can be had at once of the sagacity of Washington in selecting his instruments, and of the honor and worth of Hamilton in so long and so successfully maintaining this distinguished position. In the staff of the commander-in-chief, Hamilton, we are told, acquired the title, "The Little Lion." His spirit and courage were shown in numerous instances, particularly in the battle of Monmouth, where Lee exposed bravery to such violent hazards, an affair out

[1] "Life of Hamilton," by John C. Hamilton, I. 53.
[2] Irving's "Life of Washington," II. 251-2.

of which grew a duel between that officer and Colonel John Laurens, one of Washington's aids, in which Hamilton was the second of his friend and associate. Nor was Hamilton's counsel less serviceable in interviews with the French officers, and those frequent negotiations with the different portions of the army, and with Congress, which were among the hardest necessities of Washington's campaigns. In the course of his movements with Washington, Hamilton, in 1780, was at West Point at the moment of the discovery of the treason of Arnold, an affair which, with its attendant circumstances, brought out all the tender sympathies, as well as the fortitude of his character.

The relation of Hamilton to Washington, as a member of his military family, was suddenly brought to a termination at Head-quarters on the Hudson in February, 1781. The difference arose in a momentary forgetfulness of temper on the part of Washington. For some purpose of consultation, he required the presence of Hamilton, who was detained from keeping the appointment at the instant, for it appears to have been a delay of but a few moments. Washington, however, was impatient, and meeting Hamilton at the head of the stairs, angrily exclaimed, "Colonel Hamilton, you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes; I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." Hamilton firmly replied, "I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir," said Washington, "if it be your choice," or something to that effect, and the friends separated.[1] Washington immediately opened the way for the Secretary's continuance at his post, but, without any feeling of asperity, the overture was declined. Hamilton, however, proffered his services and counsel. With no other man than Washington, indeed, could the subordinate relation have continued so long, and Hamilton had often thought of renouncing it: but he saw in Washington the man for the times, the great representative of a great cause, for which minor considerations must be sacrificed. Writing at this moment to Schuyler, he says, "The General is a very honest man; his competitors have slender abilities and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future. I think it is necessary he should be supported."

Hamilton was now desirous to resume active service in the line, and after some discussion as to rank, received the command of a New York battalion of light infantry, which he led right manfully at the siege of Yorktown. He was anxious to signalize himself at this crowning act of the war by some distinguished exercise of bravery, and when, at an advanced period of the approaches, a redoubt was to be stormed, he eagerly solicited the forlorn hope from Washington.

[1] Hamilton's letter to his father-in-law, General Schuyler, February 18, 1781, two days after the occurrence. Hamilton's Life of Hamilton, I. 333.

Advancing to the charge with characteristic spirit at the point of the bayonet, exposed to a heavy fire, he struggled through the ditch, and surmounting the defences, took the work in the most brilliant manner. He gallantly arrested the slaughter at the first moment, and thus placed his humanity upon a level with his bravery.

The war being now brought to an end, Hamilton turned his attention to the law, and in a few months' ardent devotion—the devotion of Hamilton was always ardent—at Albany to the study with the aid of his friend, Colonel Troup, and the stimulus of his recent marriage, qualified himself thoroughly for the practice of the profession. He was admitted to the Supreme Court at its July term, 1782. About the same time, at the solicitation of Robert Morris, the financier of Congress, he accepted the appointment of receiver of the continental taxes in the State of New York with the understanding that his exertions were to be employed in impressing upon the legislature the wants and objects of the government. In pursuance of this, he urged resolutions which were unanimously adopted in July, 1782, recommending the call of a convention for the purpose of revising and amending the Articles of Confederation. He was also elected by the legislature of this year a member of Congress. He bore an active part in its debates, and was greatly employed in its important financial measures.

On the final departure of the British from New York, in 1783, Hamilton became a resident of the city with his family, and devoted himself assiduously to the practice of his profession. He was constantly, however, looked to as a public man. We find him, in 1784, appealing to the public under the signature of Phocion, in favor of more liberal and enlightened views in regard to the loyalists of the late Revolution, and their rights of property. In 1786 he is a member of the State Assembly, and in September of the same year among the delegates of the five States, which, at the instance of Virginia, met at Annapolis to confer on the commercial interests of the country; a too limited representation, indeed, to achieve the objects in view, but the precursor of the great Federal Convention, at Philadelphia, of the following year.

We have seen Hamilton's early studies of the theoretical workings of government. His practical experience in the army of Washington of the imperfections of Congress and the defects of the old Confederation, was not likely to let him forget the subject. Authority in government, rule in legislation, financial measures, taxes, loans and a bank were topics constantly before his mind. In an anonymous letter to Robert Morris, in Congress, in 1779, and with greater particularity in a letter addressed the following year to the Hon. James Duane, a member of Congress from New York, Hamilton reviews the defects of the then existing system of government, and points out the several necessities which were afterwards provided for in the Federal Constitution. The fundamental defect he attributes to a want of power in Congress, notic-

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